



Silver Circle

Member Access and Support Program

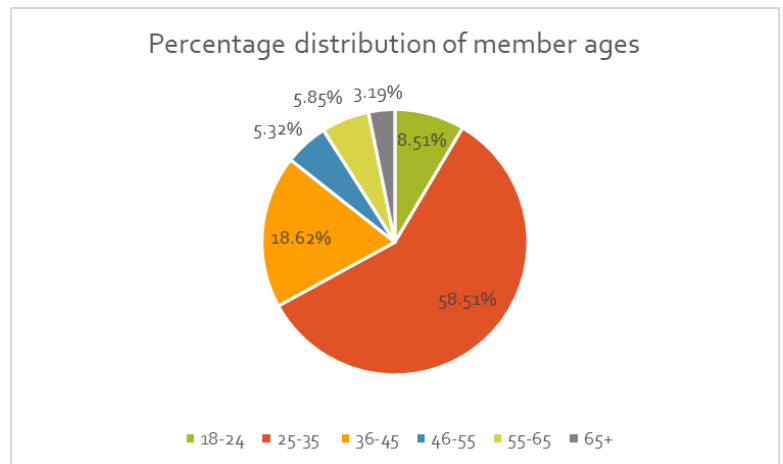
DAMIEN HALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Summary

The Silver Circle would be the first of what could be many member support programs. The program includes universal benefits meant to increase participation and access categorically for that group as well as provide incentive and support for social connections and self-sponsored activity.

Current Situation

We have some highly dedicated retirees, but hundreds more members over our 25 years have dropped away, even as they live locally. I also find it disturbing how low the percentage is of our members above the age of 60 compared to any other community band/ensemble I have seen. We have not done anything as an org to reach out to or recognize these members of our family and expecting them to reach out and jump into what feels so different now is not recognizing their needs.



Members over 55 account for 9.04% of total active

Proposed Program

I want to create a space for older members to be able to participate and enjoy our community even as an emeritus or supporter. I propose we should have a special program for dedicated members who have reached retirement age. This would include some income-supportive benefits and aspects to grow inclusion and recognition.

Requirements

- At least 5 years of active membership
- At least 60 years of age

Benefits

1. Lifetime membership at no charge
2. A bio on a special page on our website
3. Discounted season tickets
4. Season tickets on a payment plan
5. Discount at Rainbow City Shop

6. Circle club meetings, activities, and coffee clutches

Costs

- Reduced dues income from members that meet requirements
 - Applies to few current active members
 - Encourages emeritus members to return without dues payments
 - Costs will grow as active members age into program (5+ years)
- Volunteer costs
 - Minimal management by Membership Coordinator
 - Email and tech access control
 - Posting profiles to website
 - ED/AD interfacing time

We have very few active members who apply to this program, so there are minimal startup costs. Though there are some distributed volunteer duties, the program would be designed to be self-operating. We provide basic universal benefits, and circle members are given the purpose and opportunity to meet and utilize the space however they see fit to connect and integrate with the organization.

Expected Impacts

Diversity – Flatten Age Distribution

The organization is very heavily comprised of people in the middle age brackets. To increase the diversity of the age of our members needs intentional support for their needs, but also a space to connect with others across the organization that can help to increase connections and friendships. Intentionality is required in policy and structure to ensure marginalized groups don't get left behind and replaced by more dominant groups that need less support.

Equity and Access – Income Support

By focusing on the universal barrier that effects most members of this age bracket, fixed income support, the organization extends its financial support model in a way that recognizes the unique needs of this group. Since categorically most would benefit greatly from reduction of dues, they do not represent the same need that the Angel Fund was designed to meet. The Angel Fund, with its requirement to request and renew, implies that income levels may rise to eliminate the need. That is not the case for those over 60 that need income support, who are not likely to see a large rise in income. Forcing them to ask for support quarterly does not recognize their needs in a humane way.

Inclusion of Members Who Experience Us Differently

As we grow, our ensembles, departments, and instrumental sections start to silo. By intentionally creating member "circles" for distinct identity groups, it will layer across the ensemble structure to create a cohesion across the organization. It will help to boost their collective power both to create opportunities for them to connect with our activities, but also to use their collective power to lobby for their interests to leadership and the board. This helps to bring issues and evolutions of policy to the

surface sooner through organized channels to quell problems and grievances that could cause members to exit or reduce morale.

Belonging – Members Give Back When We Show We Care

As a population, retirees are plagued by depression and other maladies due to loss of social connections. Some of our own emeritus members may experience this as well, and Rainbow City could create space for them to be welcomed and supported. Simply by creating intentional space, we expand the ways that the organization creates a sense of belonging that extends beyond those that wish to actively play music in an ensemble.

The organization is only starting to intentionally recognize and foster more stakeholder groups such as donors, volunteers, and patrons. Member circles would help to boost each of these areas and be a self-perpetuating source for this energy. The “band family” never was just the people in the ensemble; now we would begin to create the same close connections outside the ensemble that create a true sense of love and belonging.